

Message Text

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ACTION OES-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 ACDA-12 CIAE-00 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 EB-08 NRC-05 SOE-02 DODE-00
SS-15 SP-02 CEQ-01 PM-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /104 W
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R 101502Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7114
INFO USDOEHQ WASHDC
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USIAEA

DEPT PASS IO/SCT
DOE FOR AMMONS, IA

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: TECH, ENRG, IAEA
SUBJECT: RESEARCH REACTOR: DENSIFIED FUELS

1. DURING MAY 23-26 MEETING IN VIENNA ON RESEARCH REACTOR RENEWAL AND UPGRADING PROGRAMS, US DELEGATION MEMBERS (D. HOYLE AND R. WILLIAMSON) DISCUSSED INFORMALLY WITH SECRETARIAT MEMBERS REIJONEN AND KAKIHANA AND AUSTRIAN DELEGATE (BURCHER) THE POSSIBILITY OF A JOINT EFFORT IN WHICH THE AUSTRIAN ASTRA RESEARCH REACTOR WOULD BE USED TO DEMONSTRATE FEASIBILITY OF SUBSTITUTION OF DENSIFIED LEU FUEL IN PLACE OF HEU. AT SECRETARIAT'S REQUEST, MISOFFS MET ON JULY 7 WITH MESSRS REIJONEN AND PHILLIPS (HEAD OF PHYSICS SECTION, DIVISION OF RESEARCH AND LABORATORIES) FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION OF THIS POSSIBLE JOINT EFFORT.

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2. REIJONEN REPORTED THAT MATTER HAD BEEN DISCUSSED WITH MR. T. WOJCIK, OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL, AND THAT THE AGENCY WAS INTERESTED IN JOINT PARTICIPATION IF THE PROGRAM HAD DEVELOPMENTAL FEATURE. THEY ENVISIONED THEIR ROLE AS PRIMARILY ONE OF TECHNICAL REVIEW, TO INCLUDE A CONTRACT WITH

AUSTRIA FOR COLLECTION AND PROVISION OF DATA ON ALL ASPECTS OF THE FUEL SUBSTITUTION PROGRAM, AND TO CONVENING A GROUP OF EXPERTS TO ASSESS THE DATA AND JUDGE RESULTS IN ORDER FOR THE AGENCY TO BE IN A POSITION TO BE ABLE TO RECOMMEND AND ASSIST MEMBER STATES IN MAKING SIMILAR FUEL SUBSTITUTIONS.

3. TO PREPARE THE AGENCY FOR ITS ROLE, REIJONEN AND PHILLIPS REQUESTED EARLY AVAILABILITY OF THE FOLLOWING:

- A. INFORMATION ABOUT THE NATURE AND SCHEDULE STATUS OF US DENSIFIED FUEL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, TO INCLUDE ANY PUBLICLY AVAILABLE TECHNICAL REPORTS.

- B. TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS AND PRICES OF US DENSIFIED FUEL.

- C. TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS FOR ABOUT ONE WEEK IN VIENNA WITH A US COST-FREE EXPERT ON THE PROGRAM.

4. DURING MISOFFS DISCUSSION WITH REIJONEN AND PHILLIPS, SEVERAL ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AROSE, AS FOLLOWS:

- A. REIJONEN STATED THAT DURING MAY MEETING, US LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DELS HAD REFERRED TO US FUNDS WHICH WOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR THIS PURPOSE. WAS THAT REFERENCE TO THE US PEACEFUL NUCLEAR COOPERATION INITIATIVE MADE AT THE UN-SSOD, OR WERE THE USDELS REFERRING TO OTHER ADDITIONAL FUNDS?

- B. WOULD THE PROPOSED SUBSTITUTION OF DENSIFIED FUEL INTO THE AUSTRIAN ASTRA REACTOR BE PART OF THE SSOD INITIATIVE, OR WOULD IT BE SEPARATE?

- C. HAS THE US MADE ANY FURTHER INITIATIVES TO AUSTRIA ON THIS SUBJECT? IF NOT, WHEN WOULD FURTHER STEPS BE TAKEN? WHAT WOULD BE THE SCHEDULE, PROGRAM AND FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS?

- D. WOULD DENSIFIED FUEL RELOAD OF ASTRA REACTOR BE ONLY OF THAT PART OF HEU FUEL WHICH NEEDED REPLACEMENT, OR ARE WE THINKING OF SUBSTITUTION OF COMPLETE NEW FUEL CORE? POINT WAS MADE THAT PHASED SUBSTITUTION WOULD YIELD REAL-WORLD RESULTS, BUT WOULD TAKE VERY LONG TIME BEFORE COMPLETE RESULTS WERE KNOWN.

- E. AGENCY WOULD LIKE TO BE INVOLVED IN DEVELOPMENT OF SPECIFICATIONS FOR FUEL ELEMENTS AND IN THEIR FABRICATION TO SUFFICIENT EXTENT TO BE KNOWLEDGEABLE OF OUR TECHNOLOGY. IS THIS POSSIBLE AND HOW MIGHT SUCH INVOLVEMENT BE IMPLEMENTED?

- F. AGENCY INQUIRED RE U.S. REACTION IF FRANCE, FOR EXAMPLE, MADE A SIMILAR OFFER. IN THIS CONNECTION, WE ASSUME U.S. WOULD WELCOME SIMILAR INITIATIVE FROM FRENCH OR OTHER SUPPLIER STATES IF MADE, INCLUDING AGENCY INVOLVEMENT THEREIN.

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- G. WE ALSO ASSUME THAT FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE BY US-SSOD INITIATIVE (ASSUMING CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL) WOULD BE APPLIED TO PROCUREMENT OF LEU FUEL ONLY FROM U.S. WE ARE UNCERTAIN, HOWEVER, WHETHER THIS WOULD ALSO APPLY TO FABRICATION SERVICES, E.G., WOULD SUCH FUNDS BE USED TO PAY FOR FABRICATION COSTS OF FRENCH FIRM?

- H. HOW EXTENSIVELY WOULD U.S. DENSIFIED FUEL HAVE BEEN TESTED IN U.S. RESEARCH REACTORS BEFORE USE IN AUSTRIAN RESEARCH REACTORS?

- I. DOES U.S. PLAN TO ANNOUNCE THE SSOD INITIATIVE DURING THE SEPTEMBER GENERAL CONFERENCE AS WE DID AT THE JUNE BOARD? IF SO, WILL WE BE PREPARED TO OFFER ADDITIONAL DETAILS? MISSION RECOMMENDS THAT, IF NOT

ALREADY PLANNED, OUR SSOD INITIATIVE SHOULD BE
ANNOUNCED AT THE GENERAL CONFERENCE INCLUDING AS
MUCH DETAIL AS POSSIBLE. LEAHY

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